

## [More Tobacco Road]

Duplicate

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER TERRY ROTH

ADDRESS 47 W. 69th. 1938

DATE December 5, 1938

SUBJECT MORE TALES OF A LOCAL TOBACCO ROAD

1. Date and time of interview December 1, 1938
2. Place of interview Washington Square Park
3. Name and address of informant "Just a guy named Elmer"
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

See previous interview of November 28, 1938: -STORIES OF A LOCAL TOBACCO ROAD, for information re-Informant.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

## Library of Congress

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth

ADDRESS 47 W. 69th St.

DATE Dec. 5, 1938

SUBJECT "MORE TALES OF A LOCAL TOBACCO ROAD"

Oscar Spencer, age 65, and his wife Minnie, age 60 are living with his mother-in-law Mrs. Rumor, age, 95. Mrs. Rumor is lucky to die at the age of 95 and puts Oscar up to the necessity of making a gravestone for her in the local cemetery. There are two; one for the Mays and one for the Spencer. Oscar hasn't any family plot but the Rumors, being part of the May clan have, so he wonders what kind of a tombstone to have, so Oscar, being descended from French Peasant, wants to know the most economical way of doing this business. He gets a big stone hauled to his place. Then he works it up in the shape of a tree, with bark effect, and flowers around the edge, and in the middle he prints, "Frieda Rumor, born 1838 died 1933"; but he thinks it's big enough to make it do for the whole family so he puts "Minnie Spencer, born 1873 — died — and then his own name. "Oscar Spencer," born 1868 — died — but he puts his own name on top so it reads, "Oscar Spencer, underneath, "Minnie Spencer" and on the bottom his mother-in-law.

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On my porch there were a gang of kids and I was curious because there were several family names in this one house. Apparently one mother to about four kids; two pairs, say, each of which had 2 the name of the mother and father, so I said to the little girl Shirley. "How is it that your name is Jones, and John's name is Smith, and your mother's name is Brown. So little Bruce Johnson (10 years old) who was visiting me, interrupted, "Well, Naomi, (that's the mother) had Shirley by Howard, didn't she?" (Howard is the guy she is living with.) Little Shirley is kind of coy but not too ashamed. "Well, you see mother isn't married to Howard.

It all began when a Brooklyn doctor got cancer so he moved to Yankeetown. He grew two husky sons and one joins the Navy and gets himself all tattooed. Then he goes to India and when he comes back he picks up a girl in New York no better than off the streets, the neighbors say, and she looks it. According to the guy himself, he wouldn't have married her at all but her father was a Mason and so was he. So he married the girl. She gets some money and lends it to him so he builds a house. So she owns part of the house and she owns part of the car, too. Well, he comes home one day and discovers the local Don Juan sleeping with his wife. This here Don Juan, He's about 50, needs just a glance from a woman. So he decides to beat this guy up but instead Don Juan beats him to a frazzle. Well, the outcome was that the wife foreclosed the mortgage on the house and took the car away from him. She sleeps with her paramour, lives in his house and drives his car. So he goes back to his papa where it stands today, except that she has taken in to board a whole crop of another family, three kids who belong to somebody else and they are the toughest ragamuffins you ever want to see.